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Urbanization—it seems a fact of modern life. The country mouse moves to town and becomes the city mouse. How has this type of migration shown up in Utah's population over the past 65 years? The answers may or may not surprise you.

Back in 1940, roughly 40 percent of Utah's population lived outside the "big four" Wasatch Front counties—Salt Lake, Utah, Davis and Weber. And for roughly two decades, the share of population living outside the Wasatch Front steadily declined. In those two decades, roughly 15 percent of Utah's population had shifted to the Wasatch Front from more rural counties.

## Holding Steady

By 1964, the population hemorrhaging from less-urbanized areas seemed to stop. In fact, from 1965 to 1995, Utah's off-the-Front population share held relatively steady at about 22 to 23 percent. Now, in the last ten years, the off-the-Front population share has started to increase—albeit at a snail's pace. In 2005, slightly more than 24 percent of Utah's population resides in non-Wasatch Front counties.

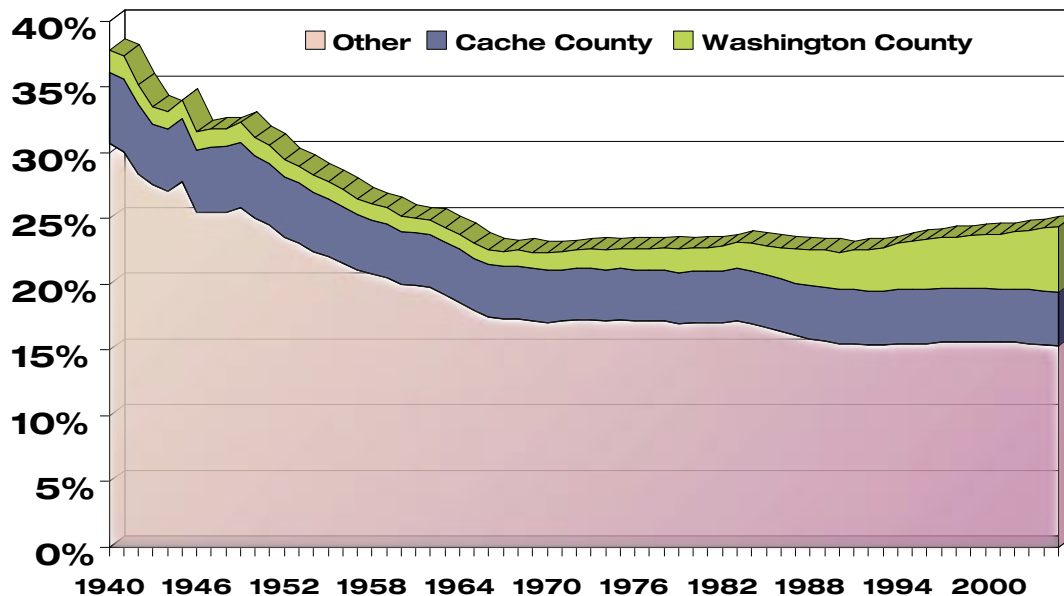
## Reclaiming a Bit of Ground

Why are these counties slowly reclaiming population ground? Many of the fastest-growing counties are those contiguous to the Wasatch Front. As urban counties become congested and expensive, individuals have spilled out into Tooele, Morgan, Summit, Juab and other nearby counties. In addition, regional population centers have begun to arise. Washington County has grown so rapidly, it was recently designated a Metropolitan Statistical Area by the federal government. Cache County has also obtained that designation although its population climb was more gradual.

## We're All Different

When combined, off-the-Front counties show a trend. However, the population experiences of these counties are as varied as the counties themselves. Some of the counties with larger population bases in 1940 (Box Elder, Cache, Washington, Iron, and Tooele) experienced continued population growth through most of the 1940-2005 time period.


## Utah Off-the-Wasatch-Front\* Population as a Percent of Total Population



Source: Utah Population Estimates Committee.

\*For this chart, Wasatch Front counties are considered Salt Lake, Utah, Weber, and Davis counties.

Other natural resource-dependent counties (such as Uintah, Duchesne, Emery, Carbon) showed population ebbs and flows which coincided with booms and busts in their economic base. A substantial number of counties experienced net out-migration between 1940 and 1965 only to regain population ground in the 60s, 70s, 80s, and 90s.

Interestingly, two counties—Piute and Garfield—maintain a 2005 population smaller than registered in 1940. In addition, Emery and Rich counties currently house almost an identical number of residents today as they did 65 years ago. 



### did you know?

- Leggett & Platt Inc. will shut down operation of its Cedar City plant in mid-December, displacing about 70 employees.
- The new, \$6-million terminal at Cedar City Regional Airport officially opened with a dedication ceremony and a flight touching down on a freshly paved runway.
- The state School and Institutional Trust Lands Administration has selected Ivory Homes to build a residential community of almost 1,000 residences on 360 acres of trust land near St. George.